CAPTAIN AMERICA

NO. 46

APRIL COMICS 10¢

IN THIS ISSUE!

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CAPTAIN AMERICA

in "INVITATION TO MURDER!"

GREED FOR GOLD STIRS EVIL IN THE HUMAN BREAST, AND OFTTIMES MURDER RESULTS! AND WHERE THERE IS MURDER AND EVIL THERE YOU WILL ALWAYS FIND CAPTAIN AMERICA AND HIS PAL, BUCKY, HAMMERING HOME ONCE AGAIN WITH FLASHING FISTS THEIR MOTTO AND CREED — "CRIME DOESN'T PAY!"

MURDER STALKS THE SPRAWLING, STORM-LASHED HOME OF THE LATE SILAS MATINSON, MULTI-MILLIONAIRE-

AND AS THE CLOCK BOOMS THE MYSTERIOUS HOUR OF MIDNIGHT, A WILL IS BEING READ IN THE LIBRARY OF THE SINISTER MANSION-

TO MY FAITHFUL BUTLER AND HOUSEKEEPER, THE SUM OF TWENTY THOUSAND DOLLARS EACH! THE REST OF MY FORTUNE IS TO BE DIVIDED EQUALLY AMONG MY WIFE, BROTHER AND NEPHEW!

IT IS FURTHER PROVIDED THAT SHOULD ANY ONE OF THE THREE DIE, THE SURVIVORS ARE TO INHERIT THE DECEASED'S SHARE OF MY FORTUNE AFTER PAYING THE BUTLER AND HOUSEKEEPER AN ADDITIONAL TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS EACH---

NONSENSE! THERE IS PLENTY FOR ALL OF YOU!

AND THAT MEANS THAT IF I DIE, THEY GET MY SHARE??

EXACTLY!

YES! AND IF YOU BOTH DIE, I WOULD GET THE WHOLE THING!

SILAS WAS MAD TO MAKE SUCH A WILL!

WHY, IT'S- IT'S AN INVITATION TO MURDER EACH OTHER!

EXCEPT THE BUTLER AND HOUSEKEEPER, OF COURSE---

TWO HOURS LATER, ON THE RAIN LASHED ROAD BORDERING THE HOUSE, TWO WET AND BEDRAGGLED FIGURES STRUGGLE TO FREE THEIR STALLED CAR FROM THE MIRE.....

UH-! NO USE, BUCKY! WHEEL KEEPS SPINNING!

THERE'S A HOUSE DOWN THE ROAD, STEVE! LET'S TAKE SHELTER!

BUT, AS THEY RACE FOR SHELTER, THE LYNX-EYED STEVE SPIES TWO FIGURES STRUGGLING ON THE EDGE OF THE HIGH CLIFF AHEAD....

HEY! WHERE YA GOIN'?

SOMETHING WRONG OVER THERE! C'MON!

BEFORE STEVE CAN REACH THE STRUGGLING FIGURES, ONE HURTLES OFF THE CLIFF...

..WHILE THE OTHER RACES AWAY...

(GROAN) TOO LATE!

THERE GOES THE OTHER ONE TOWARD THE HOUSE!

MUST HAVE DUCKED IN HERE!

NO! THERE HE COMES! UP THE OTHER ROAD!

NOT SO FAST, MISTER!

WHAT THE--??

STEVE EASILY WARDS OFF THE FEEBLE ATTACK!

LET GO OF ME! BOOM!

HAVE TO BE CAREFUL HOW YOU O.K. A MIDDLE AGED MAN-

HEY, STEVE! LOOK! HERE COMES ANOTHER GUY!

AND AS THE SECOND FIGURE TRIES TO DASH AWAY, BUCKY GOES INTO ACTION!

NO YOU DON'T! BOOP!

GOOD WORK, BUCKY! LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT HIM!

NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT!

WE'LL TAKE THEM INSIDE AND FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE!

WHAT THE DEVIL IS GOING ON? WHO WAS RINGING-?

THESE TWO MEN, SIR! THEY SAY SOMETHING ABOUT **MURDER** AND CAPTURING MR. MATTSON'S BROTHER AND NEPHEW!

AFTER STEVE AND BUCKY TELL THEIR STORY OF THE STRUGGLE ON THE CLIFF, A HURRIED SEARCH OF THE HOUSE REVEALS THAT THE WIFE IS MISSING....

POOR MADAME! THEN IT MUST HAVE BEEN SHE WHO WAS THROWN OVER THE CLIFF!

YES! AND THESE TWO DID IT SO THEY COULD GET HER SHARE OF THE FORTUNE!

HE DID IT YOU MEAN! I SAW HIM THROW HER OFF THE CLIFF!

YOU LIE! IT WAS YOU WHO DID IT! I WATCHED YOU DO IT!

HERE! JUST A MINUTE! SUPPOSE BOTH OF YOU EXPLAIN WHAT YOU WERE DOING ON THE CLIFF!

I WENT THERE IN ANSWER TO THIS THREATENING NOTE! IT STATES I AM IN DANGER AND TO MEET THE WRITER ON THE CLIFF!

AND I ALSO RECEIVED SUCH A NOTE, HERE!

READ IT YOURSELF! IT WARNED THAT I WOULD BE KILLED UNLESS I OBEYED!

MINE SAID THE SAME THING! THAT'S WHY I WENT!

OH-OH!

BUT ARE YOU BOTH OUT OF YOUR MINDS? THERE IS NO SIGN OF WRITING ON EITHER PIECE OF PAPER!

SOMETHING AWFULLY QUEER GOING ON HERE...

BUT I SWEAR THAT I RECEIVED A THREATENING NOTE-

AND SO DID I -

QUIET! THIS IS A CASE FOR THE POLICE! AND I'D SUGGEST THAT NO ONE TRY TO LEAVE UNTIL THEY GET HERE!

YOU REALIZE, OF COURSE, THAT YOU TWO ARE IMPORTANT WITNESSES AND CANNOT LEAVE EITHER, THE BUTLER WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR ROOM!

YES, OF COURSE!

(GRUMBLE) GOSH, WITH THE BRIDGE WASHED OUT, THE POLICE WON'T BE HERE FOR HOURS! WHO WANTS TO SPEND THE NIGHT IN THIS CREEPY OLD---

...PSSST.... TAKE A LOOK AT THE BUTLER'S SHOES, BUCKY!

AND IN THEIR ROOM, MOMENTS LATER-

WOW! THEN THE BUTLER DID IT!

DON'T KNOW YET! HURRY, LAD! CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM HERE!

WE'LL MAKE SURE THE OTHERS ARE IN THEIR ROOM, THEN MEET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE!

CHECK!

WOW! IT'S WORSE THAN EVER! WHERE WE HEADIN'!

DOWN TO THE BOTTOM OF THE CLIFF! I WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT THE CORPSE!

THERE'S SOMETHING WAY OUT ON THAT BUNCH OF ROCKS!

THAT MAY BE THE BODY! YOU STAY HERE, I'LL GET IT!

AND WHILE BUCKY WATCHES CAP BATTLING THE RAGING SEA, A SLINKING KNIFE-WIELDING FIGURE CREEPS UP ON HIM.....

AH! THEY HAVE SEPARATED! THAT MAKES IT EASIER TO KILL THEM! FIRST THE YOUNGSTER...AND THEN CAPTAIN AMERICA WHEN HE COMES BACK!

MEANTIME, CAP REACHES THE INERT FORM...

GOING TO BE QUITE A JOB GETTING IT BACK TO THE BEACH!

STIFLING AN EXCLAMATION OF SURPRISE UPON EXAMINING THE CORPSE, CAP WHIRLS TOWARD A FAINT CRY FROM THE BEACH...

CAP! HELP!

HEY! THIS IS A.....

GREAT GUNS, IT'S BUCKY!

CAP! CAP! OW!

THE COURAGEOUS BUCKY HOLDS OFF THE FIEND LONG ENOUGH FOR CAP TO REACH THE BEACH!

UH-UH! HE'S TOO STRONG FOR--ME--

HERE I AM, BUCKY!

OOF!

AND HERE HE GOES!

UGH!

HE'LL KEEP UNTIL I SEE IF BUCKY IS ALL RIGHT!

OUCH! MY HEAD! HEY, CAP! LOOK! THERE GOES THE BUTLER!

BACK TO THE HOUSE WE GO! THAT'S WHERE HE'S EVIDENTLY HEADING!

WELL, I GUESS THAT ABOUT CLINCHES THE CASE AGAINST THE BUTLER!

SH-SH! THE HOUSE-KEEPER!

BUT CAP'S SUSPICIONS ARE AROUSED BY THE PROMPTNESS OF THE HOUSEKEEPER IN DIVULGING THE BUTLER'S WHEREABOUTS....

HE'S HIDING IN THE WINE CELLAR! COME, I WILL SHOW YOU WHERE HE IS!

SHE'S IN ON THIS! MUST LET HER THINK I'M FALLING INTO THEIR TRAP!

THERE HE IS!

C'MON, CAP! LET'S HAMMER A CONFESSION OUT OF HIS MURDER-ING HIDE!

EASY, LAD!

FORTUNATELY, WE STUMBLED IN BEFORE THE CONSPIRATORS COULD CARRY OUT THEIR MURDEROUS PLOT!

BEFORE?? BUT WHAT ABOUT THE WOMAN WHO WAS THROWN FROM THE CLIFF?

THE BUTLER ISN'T THE KILLER, BUCKY! HE'S ONLY A TOOL IN THE HANDS OF A MASTER PLOTTER! AND SO IS THE HOUSEKEEPER!

WHAT?

CAP MAKES AN ASTOUNDING REVELATION – THAT BRINGS IMMEDIATE RESULTS!

MRS. MATISON WASN'T THROWN FROM THE CLIFF, BUCKY! I LEARNED THAT WHEN I EXAMINED THE CORPSE ON THE ROCKS – AND FOUND IT TO BE JUST A DUMMY!

WOW!

UP WITH YOUR HANDS, BOTH OF YOU!

WE WALKED RIGHT INTO A TRAP!

RIGHT! I DID IT DELIBERATELY TO SMOKE OUT THE REAL RAT BEHIND THIS THING!

HEY! IF THAT BODY WASN'T A CORPSE, WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REAL MRS. MATISON?

THAT I INTEND TO LEARN WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MINUTES!

WHAT THE...? IT'S THE LAWYER!

YES, BUCKY! AND THE BRAIN OF THE WHOLE PLOT!

SUDDENLY BUCKY'S ATTENTION IS ATTRACTED BY A CREAKING SOUND – AND HE WHIRLS TOWARD WHERE A SECTION OF THE WINE BIN IS SWINGING OPEN!

BUCKY'S AMAZEMENT IS SHORT-LIVED AS CAP SIGNALS FOR ACTION!

LET'S GO, LAD! AND WATCH THOSE GUNS!

YAH!@@*!

I HATE TO TACKLE A LADY—BUT A GUN'S A GUN!

UGH!

HA! THE YOUNG DEVIL'S BACK MAKES A PERFECT TARGET!

THANKS, CAP! PRETTY SLICK DOINGS!

OOF!

CATCH THE BUTLER'S GUN AND COVER THEM, LAD!

SO ENGROSSED ARE CAP AND BUCKY IN THE TURN OF EVENTS THAT THEY FAIL TO NOTE A FIGURE STEALTHILY GLIDING TOWARD BUCKY –

I CAN FORCE CAPTAIN AMERICA TO SURRENDER BY THREATENING THE LIFE OF HIS COMPANION!

UP YOU GO! THAT'S CAP'S ORDERS!

DROP THOSE GUNS!

WHAT THE--??

(GROAN) THE WIFE! I SHOULD'VE KNOW SHE'D BE IN THERE!

IF YOU MOVE ANOTHER INCH, CAPTAIN AMERICA--HE DIES! UP WITH YOUR HANDS!

EXCELLENT WORK, MY DEAR! YOUR APPEARANCE WAS MOST TIMELY!

I'LL TAKE OVER NOW! THE MEDDLING OF THESE TWO FOOLS WILL FORCE US TO CHANGE OUR WHOLE PLAN!

ALAS, CAPTAIN AMERICA! YOU FORCE ME TO ACTUALLY COMMIT MURDER (SIGH)- A THING THAT MY ORIGINAL PLAN DIDN'T CALL FOR!

YOU'RE WASTING TIME! KILL THEM AND GET IT OVER WITH!

NICE DAME, THAT DAME!

NOT YET, MY DEAR! THERE ARE TWO OTHERS WHO MUST FIRST BE REMOVED!

SURE! FIRST WE GET RID OF THE BROTHER AND THE NEPHEW!

I'LL GET THEM DOWN HERE AT ONCE!

AH! BUT THEY WON'T BE THE FIRST TO DIE!

YOU DIRTY BLOOD-THIRSTY SWINE!

BANG!

YOU TWO WILL!

BANG!

OW!

UGH!

CAP IS BROUGHT UP SHORT AS THE STILL-SMOKING GUN ONCE AGAIN COVERS BUCKY!

YOU ARE WISE NOT TO HAVE ATTACKED, CAPTAIN AMERICA!.. NOW, MY DEAR! GATHER UP THE FALLEN GUNS OF OUR TWO ERSTWHILE CONSPIRATORS!

IT WAS NECESSARY TO KILL THEM FIRST - THEY WERE ARMED AND COULD POSSIBLY HAVE MADE TROUBLE FOR US! BESIDES, THEY KNEW TOO MUCH - AND BEST OF ALL, WE DON'T HAVE TO SHARE THE MONEY WITH THEM NOW!

YOU CAN'T MEAN TO KILL THE BROTHER AND NEPHEW IN COLD BLOOD LIKE THESE TWO?

WHY NOT? THEY STAND IN THE WAY OF OUR GETTING THE ENTIRE FORTUNE!

ALAS! (SIGH) IT ALL WOULD HAVE WORKED OUT SO NEATLY AND EASILY BUT FOR YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA! THOSE TWO FOOLS WOULD HAVE KEPT ACCUSING EACH OTHER OF BEING THE ONE WHO HURLED THE WIFE OVER THE CLIFF, AND THE POLICE WOULD HAVE ASSUMED THAT EACH WAS TRYING TO GET RID OF THE OTHER!

AND FINALLY THE LAW WOULD HAVE ACCUSED BOTH OF THEM, CLAIMING THEY COMMITTED MURDER TO GET HOLD OF THE ENTIRE FORTUNE!

AND THEN AFTER THEY HAD GONE TO THE ELECTRIC CHAIR, THE WIFE WOULD SUDDENLY REAPPEAR WITH A STORY ABOUT LOSING HER MEMORY AND WANDERING AWAY!

AND WE TWO WOULD LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER! HA-HA!

CAP SEIZES THE OPPORTUNITY TO WHISPER TO BUCKY WHILE THE LAWYER AND THE WIFE HOLD A CONSULTATION—

SO WATCH FOR MY SIGNAL AND BE PREPARED TO ACT INSTANTLY!

BUT YOU HAD TO INTERFERE, DIDN'T YOU, CAPTAIN AMERICA— SO NOW YOU MUST DIE! WE HAVE DECIDED TO KILL YOU TWO FIRST, AND THEN THE BROTHER AND THE NEPHEW!

GOOD! GIVES US A CHANCE TO SAVE THOSE TWO POOR DEVILS!

SINCE IT WOULD NOT DO TO HAVE YOUR BODIES FOUND HERE, WE WILL HOLD THE EXECUTION AT THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF!

BUT HOW DO YOU INTEND TO ACCOUNT FOR THE DEATH OF THE NEPHEW AND BROTHER NOW?

OH, VERY SIMPLE! WE SHOOT THEM WITH THE GUNS OF THE BUTLER AND HOUSEKEEPER, WIPE OFF OUR FINGER-PRINTS, AND THEN CLOSE THEIR HANDS OVER THEIR GUN BUTTS AGAIN!

WHEN THE POLICE ARRIVE, WE SHOW THEM THAT THE BUTLER AND THE HOUSEKEEPER QUITE PLAINLY MURDERED THE TWO OTHER HEIRS!

THEN, OF COURSE, YOU PLAY THE HERO AND SAY THAT YOU KILLED THE BUTLER AND HOUSEKEEPER!

PRECISELY!

NOW WE JUST BACK AWAY TWENTY PACES SO YOU CAN'T TRY ANY TRICKS -- THEN WE FIRE, AND YOU TWO MEDDLERS ARE NO MORE! HA-HA!

IN THE FEW SECONDS LEFT TO THEM, CAP CLIPS WHISPERED INSTRUCTIONS!

TURN AROUND AND FACE US!

READY NOW, LAD! WATCH THEIR TRIGGER FINGERS!

OUR KEEN EYES PIERCE THE DULL GRAY LIGHT, TO SPOT THE FINGERS OF THE MURDEROUS PAIR AS THEY PRESS HOME THE TRIGGERS!

AND A SPLIT SECOND BEFORE THE WEAPONS EXPLODE IN A DEADLY STREAM, CAP AND BUCKY WITH PERFECT TIMING CRUMPLE TO THE GROUND AS IF HIT!

BANG!

BANG!

WE'LL MAKE SURE THEY'RE DEAD AND THEN ROLL THEIR BODIES OVER!

WHEW! HOPE THE ACT FOOLED THEM!

BUT AS THE TWO MURDERERS ARE ABOUT TO DELIVER THE "COUP DE GRACE"— CAP SUDDENLY SIGNALS!

WHAT THE--?? OOF!

OW! MY HAND!

HEY! HIS GUN IS POINTED RIGHT AT HER BACK!

RETRIBUTION OVERTAKES THE FEMININE PARTNER OF THE MURDER DUO, AS A BULLET FIRED BY THE LAWYER TEARS THROUGH HER BODY!

IN DESPERATION, HIS OPPONENT CLUTCHES CAP AS HE TOPPLES OVER THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF!

OOPS!

UGH!

CAP! (GROAN) CAP!

AND MINUTES LATER AT THE BASE OF THE CLIFF!

(GROAN) HE GRABBED CAP AND THEY BOTH WENT OVER!

HELLO THERE!

(GULP) IT'S CAP! HURRAY!

LATER-

AND SINCE YOU REFUSED IT AS A REWARD, CAPTAIN AMERICA, WE'RE GOING TO DONATE IT TO THE WAR FUND!

GEE, CAP! I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE THIS ONE!

A MIRACLE OF JUSTICE, LAD! SO I COULD MAKE THIS MURDEROUS RAT PAY FOR HIS CRIMES!

NEITHER OF US WOULD EVER TOUCH HER SHARE NOW! WE DON'T WANT IT!

THE END

THE HUMAN TORCH

AS ALLIED ARMIES SMASH THROUGH GERMAN FRONTIERS ON THEIR WAY TO BERLIN NAZI BIG-WHIGS SHIVER IN THEIR BOOTS! AND THE NAZI SUPER-RACE TURNS TO A RACE OF NAZI SUPER-RATS, SCURRYING FRANTICALLY TO ESCAPE THE SINKING SHIP THAT IS THE THIRD REICH! A GROUP OF THESE SHIVERING CURS TRY TO ESCAPE TO AMERICA, BUT THE **HUMAN TORCH** AND HIS PAL **TORO** FLAME IN THE PICTURE AND CHANGE THE MINDS OF ---

THE FIVE TRAITORS FROM BERLIN!

IN WASHINGTON, D.C. AN IMPORTANT LIST IS HANDED TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR HIS APPROVAL.....

HERE'S THE LIST OF PASSENGERS THAT ARE TO ARRIVE ON THE SWEDISH EXCHANGE SHIP HOLMSHAVEN TOMORROW, SIR!

LET ME SEE! HMMM! ALL RIGHT, BARRY I'LL STAMP IT APPROVED!

THERE ARE RUMORS OF THE NAZIS TRYING TO SHIP KEY MEN OUT OF GERMANY TO SAFER COUNTRIES! YOU, THEREFORE WILL GO TO NEW YORK AND PERSONALLY CHECK THE PASSENGERS OFF THE SHIP!

YES SIR! I'LL LEAVE TONIGHT!

LATER THAT EVENING, AT JARE BARRY'S HOME...

TAKE THE BAG TO THE CAR, JARVIS! I WANT TO GET SOMETHING FROM THE SAFE!

IN THE LIBRARY, BARRY OPENS THE WALL SAFE. BUT AS HE REMOVES THE LIST A HARSH VOICE BEHIND HIM...

DON'T CLOSE THAT SAFE!

WHAT? WHO ARE YOU?

I WANT THE PASSENGER LIST OF THE HOLMSHAVEN AND YOUR... LIFE! I SHALL TAKE YOUR LIFE, FIRST!

BANG BANG

OOOOO...

THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE BENDS OVER THE CRUMPLED BODY AND

THERE! AS SIMPLE AS THAT! ANOTHER WILL TAKE YOUR PLACE TO MEET THE EXCHANGE SHIP! HA! HA!

JUST TWO FAMILIAR FIGURES HAVE HEARD THE GUNFIRE AND ARE STREAKING DOWN TO INVESTIGATE....

SOME ONE'S RUNNING FROM THE HOUSE, TORCH!

HE'LL HEAD HIM OFF! FLAME OFF! HE CAN'T CHANCE SINGEING THE BIRD BEFORE HE QUESTION HIM!

BUT AS THE DUO FLAME OFF BEHIND THE RACING FIGURE!

GOOD THEY HAVE FLAMED OUT! I HAVE THE ADVANTAGE NOW!

...AND AS THE DUO FOLLOW THEIR QUARRY....

THERE HE IS!

OOOOO!

THEY ARE OUT COLD! SHOULD I SLIT THEIR THROATS!

DECIDEDLY NOT! JARE BARRY'S ER UNFORTUNATE DEMISE MUST BE REGARDED AS THE WORK OF A BLUNDERING BURGLAR!

SOME MOMENTS AFTER THE THUGS DEPART, TORCH AND TORO REVIVE....

SAY, WHAT HAPPENED? MY HEAD FEELS LIKE A TOP!

HE HERE SLUGGED, BUT GOOD! COME ON, LET'S SEE WHAT'S UP!

BACK IN THE LIBRARY OF THE BARRY HOME...

HE'S STONE DEAD TORCH! SHOT THRU THE HEART! WHO IS HE?

JARE BARRY! HUMPH! ATTACHED TO THE FOREIGN OFFICE, TOO! I WONDER IF THAT HAS ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIS DEATH? LOOK... THE SAFE... IT'S OPEN!

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO? CALL THE POLICE!

NO! THE SECRETARY OF STATE! IF ANYTHING RELATING TO THE GOVERNMENT IS MISSING, HE'LL KNOW IT!

SOMETIME LATER, THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND A SQUAD OF F.B.I. MEN ARRIVE ON THE SCENE...

THE ONLY THING BARRY HAD IN THE SAFE WAS THIS LIST! IT SEEMS TO BE ALL RIGHT! HIS KILLER MUST HAVE BEEN AFTER MONEY!

YEAH! WE'LL PUT OUT A DRAGNET FOR THE KILLER!

YOU WON'T FIND HIM THAT WAY!

WHY? WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF THIS?

THE KILLER WAS NO COMMON BURGLAR! HE WAS AFTER SOMETHING BIG! THAT LIST ISN'T IN BARRY'S HANDWRITING!

I'VE A HUNCH YOU'LL FIND IT A FORGERY! BARRY WAS KILLED SO THAT HE WOULDN'T BE THERE TO CHECK THOSE PASSENGERS OFF! IF THIS LIST IS A FORGERY IT PROBABLY CONTAINS NAMES OF HIGH NAZI'S DOING A SNEAK IN THIS COUNTRY! BARRY'S REPLACER WOULD OKAY THEM!

THAT'S RIGHT! HE WOULDN'T KNOW!

MINUTES GO BY... THEN...

YOU'RE RIGHT! IT'S A FORGERY! WHAT CAN WE DO... WE DON'T KNOW WHICH NAMES HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE LIST!

FIND BARRY'S KILLER! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!

BUT HOW? THE SHIP DOCKS IN TWENTY HOURS!

LOOK! THE LATE EVENING PAPERS HAVEN'T GONE TO PRESS YET! THE CHANCES ARE THE GANG MATCHES THE SHIPPING ITEMS! THEY'LL ALSO PROBABLY HAVE SOMEONE MEET THE BOAT! NOW ALL WE MUST DO.....

AND AS THE LATE EVENING PAPERS HIT THE STREET ONE FINDS ITS WAY HURRIEDLY TO THE NAZI GANG'S NEW YORK HEADQUARTERS...

BLUHM! LOOK AT THIS!

12 HOURS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE...SWEDISH EXCHANGE SHIP HOLMSHAVEN DOCKING...PIER 7 NORTH RIVER 6:49 A.M.

SO! AHEAD OF SCHEDULE, EH? THAT MEANS OUR COMRADES WILL ARRIVE SOONER THAN EXPECTED! YOU WILL HAVE TO MEET THEM AND GUIDE THEM HERE, EMIL!

AND AT THE APPOINTED HOUR...

TWO MINUTES AFTER THE HOUR AND STILL NO SIGN OF HER! I WONDER IF SOMETHING IS WRONG!

VERY WRONG, EMIL...AT LEAST FROM YOUR POINT OF VIEW, FOR OBSERVING YOU CLOSELY, ARE.....

THAT MUST BE OUR MAN, TORCH! HE SEEMS QUITE NERVOUS!

HE'LL BE SHAKING BEFORE WE'RE THROUGH WITH HIM! SET READY, TORO, I'M GOING TO SIGNAL THE LOUD SPEAKER CONTROL BOOTH!

TORCH SIGNALS...

SWEDISH EXCHANGE SHIP HOLMSHAVEN WHO'S PREMATURE ARRIVAL HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED WILL ARRIVE ON FORMER SCHEDULE! THIS WILL BE 7:30 P.M.

BAH! I WISH THESE SPIES WOULD MAKE UP THEIR MINDS! NOW WE MUST CHANGE OUR PLANS AGAIN!

THE RADIO HAS MOVES OFF AND FOLLOWING HIM.....

IT WORKED! WHAT HAPPENS WHEN EMIL LEADS US TO THE HIDEOUT!

HE'LL CLEAN THE GANG OUT! THEN HE'LL TURN THE HEAT ON ONE OF THEM AND FIND OUT THE NAMES OF THE MEN THEY'RE EXPECTING!

YOU CALL THEM MEN?

I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN, LAD! MY APOLOGIES TO THE HUMAN RACE!

SOME MINUTES LATER.....

THIS IS IT, TORCH! DO WE KNOCK?

NO, KID! WE'LL MAKE THIS ONE FAST, FURIOUS AND TO THE POINT!

WHERE ARE OUR COMRADES? DIDN'T THEY ARRIVE?

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SHIPS ARRIVAL WAS AN ERROR! IT DOES NOT DOCK UNTIL TONIGHT!

I DO NOT LIKE THIS! IT HAS ALL THE EARMARKS OF A...?

I'LL RETURN TO THE BUILDING.

HIMMEL!

OKAY! ROUND 'EM UP TORO!

I'LL START AT ONE END AND SWEEP UP TOWARDS YOU!

YEOW!

ALL BUT BUJHN ARE WRAPPED UP FOR POLICE DELIVERY.....

NOW WE'RE GOING TO HAVE OUR NAZI CANARY SING! YOU WILL SING WON'T YOU?

YES I'LL TALK! I'LL DO ANYTHING JUST KEEP AWAY FROM ME!

ALL OF SUDDEN THERE'S A POLICE YET

AND THAT NIGHT AS THE HOLMS-HAVEN DOCKS AT PIER SEVEN...

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS! WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE? HAVE I NOT TOLD YOU EVERYTHING?

SO YOU CLAIM! YOU SAY YOU DON'T KNOW THE MEN YOU'RE TO MEET! WE'RE GIVING YOU A CHANCE TO PROVE IT!

HOW, TORCH!

A LITTLE HEAT APPLIED TO THE RIGHT PLACE....

WHOOOF!

AH, BLUHM, MY GOOD FREND, IT ISS ABOUT TIME YOU SHOWED UP! WAS ISS?

IT IS A TRICK! RUN! SAVE YOURSELVES!

IT'S A LITTLE LATE FOR THAT!

THE FIVE NAZIS ARE SOON GATHERED WITHIN A NET....

TALK ABOUT DROPPING FROM THE FRYING PAN INTO THE FIRE!

STAY HERE, KID, I'M GOING AFTER BLUHM! HE HAS SOME FOOLISH IDEA OF ESCAPING!

TORCH QUICKLY PUTS AN END TO BLUHM'S FOOLISH IDEA...

OHYYY! ISS HEISS!

YOU BET IT'S HOT! BUT WAIT UNTIL THEY PULL THE SWITCH ON YOU FOR BARRY'S MURDER!

SOME TIME LATER....

THANKS BOYS, THOSE NAZI CRIMINALS WILL BE PUNISHED FOR THEIR CRIMES!

THE PLEASURE WAS ALL OURS, CHIEF!

THE END

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TOO SMART TO LIVE

STANDING in the center of the bare room, Jess Gaynor stared into the hard, unyielding face of his captor. Returning that stare, Everett Parsons smiled thinly, closed the door of the room behind him.

"Sort of knocks your visit home into a cocked-hat, eh?" Parsons said levelly. "Guess more than your visit is going to get the same treatment."

"I should have known better." Jess Gaynor forced a smile, tried to relax the tension of his body. The room seemed to press in about him, the shadows at the sides out of which Parsons' face stared back almost defiantly. "I guess being on the other side so long," Jess continued amiably, "and then coming home like this, sort of makes a guy forget caution. I should have seen through that set-up of yours—"

"You didn't." Parsons chuckled faintly. "Paul did a swell job. Probably you still don't know he's actually not a kid, but a midget. A smart one, too. If I must say so, he's the brains behind this business of ours. It was his idea my meeting you at the train, pumping you full of that story about him being my kid, and all het up over aviation. I'm surprised, though, you didn't think twice about having everything dovetail so well. Meeting on the same train, living in the same town, going right past my residence ... and then coming in here." Parsons laughed. "Funny, isn't it?"

"No," Jess answered. "It isn't."

"No, of course not. It wouldn't be for you. But .... well, here we are. It's the end of the fight for you, Captain. In fact, as of now .... you're a thing of the past. I may as well tell you you won't ever come out of this building alive. If you come out at all. Which I doubt."

"Thanks for the information," Jess returned quietly. "Now that we're up to date, what's next?"

"That's up to Paul. He's running this show, you know. But for now ... you can turn around. Put your hands behind you. You'll be safer bound up. Although you couldn't get out of here if you had the chance. It's almost as safe as the Tombs!"

• • • • •

JESS tossed yellow hair out of his eyes. He had to smile at the irony of it all. Twenty-one months of successful flying over in the war theater, an enviable record of kills to his credit. In fact he had top record. Then to come home and run into the hands of a couple of .... small-time crooks!

"If you'll turn around," Parsons said softly. "After all, I'd rather not use violence just yet."

Jess Gaynor turned obediently, placing his hands behind him. His body was tense, hard. He heard Parsons approaching, felt the touch of his fingers.

With the swiftness of lightning, Captain Gaynor's fingers closed around the wrist of his captor. Simultaneously, he flung his slim body to the side, whipped Parsons around in a savage circle, flinging him across the room. Everett Parsons cried out with surprise, as he went spinning against the wall with a crash, and slid to the floor. He started dazedly to his feet.

Swiftly Jess Gaynor moved in, and as Parsons' head came on a level with Jess' body he drove a solid, smashing one-two in, and Everett Parsons crumpled back to the floor with a strangled Aahhh. His body relaxed. He was, Jess saw with satisfaction, out cold.

It was very still in the room now as Jess Gaynor picked up the gun his recent captor had held, along with the cord intended for his own wrists. With it he bound Parsons carefully, stuffed a gag into his mouth, then stepped across and into the hall.

Paul, the midget, had stayed downstairs. Where was he now? What was he doing?

Slowly Jess Gaynor closed the door. Everett

Parsons had warned the building was a veritable prison, from which it would be next to impossible to escape. But with Parsons out of the way, and only the midget remaining . . . .

A soft, boyish voice from the darkness said, "So Parsons failed me! But it won't do you any good. You're still *my* prisoner!"

Tension rippled through Jess Gaynor's body as he froze against the wall. That had been the midget's voice. It had come *from* the darkness directly before him, but now there was no other sound. . . .

Again the voice, this time from another direction. "You haven't long to live, Captain. Your days are no longer numbered. There are no days! Only hours, Captain. Hours. . . ."

The voice melted into a whisper and Jess Gaynor moved uneasily along the edge of the wall, the hand gripping the gun bathed in sweat. It was eerie, almost fearful, the way that voice came out of the dark, never from a given place, it seemed—

"You are going in the wrong direction, Captain. There is nothing ahead of you. There is nothing, Captain. . . ."

"Darn!" Jess Gaynor said softly. "What kind of mad-house is this? That under-sized little hellion—"

* * * * *

NO TELLING what kind of death trap the midget had rigged up here. He was smart. And he was connected somewhere with Axis agents; was receiving money for this job. Money for Jess Gaynor's death. Jess felt a faint chill go down his spine. How many times he'd flown over enemy territory; how many times he'd seen the ack-ack fire blossoming beneath him. How many times, times without end almost, he'd seen the planes with him going down in smoke and flame, watched with sickening dread the white parachutes of comrades billowing into the sky as they bailed out. He'd been hit more than once, had brought his ship and crew in on little more than faith and hope . . . . and the remnants of wings and body and motors just hanging together.

Now the darkness ringed him, and out of it came the voice of a midget, a crazy, criminal midget, who had only one intent and purpose—the taking of Jess Gaynor's life. . . .

"You are famous, Captain," the voice said softly. "You have one of the greatest records of this war. How do you suppose it will sound to the world, to know that upon your return home, you suddenly disappeared? Think of the loss to your country, Captain. . . ."

Jess Gaynor slid back to the door, into the room. He couldn't just bumble around like this, doing nothing. He had to fight back, and there might be one way of doing it. Parsons, lying over in a corner—

"Up," Jess Gaynor ordered softly, grinning down at the now conscious man. "You've got work to do, Parsons, old boy. There are probably enough booby traps scattered around this place to trip a whole army. You're going to find 'em for me. Let's go."

* * * * *

RELUCTANTLY Everett Parsons moved forward, out the door, guided by Jess' hand, across the hall to where the stairs led down to the first floor. Slowly Jess guided Parsons till he found the first step and was going down slowly, one at a time. Jess Gaynor's hand touched the banister beside him, held onto it closely. No telling what might happen—

There was a grating sound and suddenly Everett Parsons' body was gone from under Jess Gaynor's hand, had plummeted through a void opening in the stairs before them!

The crash of a falling body sounded dimly and a moment later Jess swung his leg over the banister, balanced himself and let go. His body slid swiftly through the dark, came to rest at the newel post at the bottom. He swung off, listened a second, moved forward through the dark. His hand found a door knob and cautiously he opened it, holding his breath. It should lead into the space directly under the trap—

Resolutely Jess Gaynor stepped through, slid along the wall. He pressed against the wall and waited, breath shallow, heart pounding. If this worked—

Again the door opened and a beam of light cut through the dark. A moment later the midget stepped in, leaning forward, peering at the crumpled figure on the floor. . . .

Jess Gaynor hurled himself upon the diminutive man. "You were smart, Paul, but not smart enough! Loud speakers hooked up around the place to scare me. Only it didn't work!"

They crashed to the floor, Jess Gaynor throwing his full weight upon the under-sized man beneath him. He saw the face distorted by hate and anger and surprise. . . .

It was over now. A hard smile touched Jess Gaynor's lips. A price on his head . . . . a price paid these two criminals. Smart criminals, in a way, but still they had failed. As in times past, Jess Gaynor had seen the nearness of death and had escaped.

THE END

CAPTAIN AMERICA

vs The SHADOW OF THE MONSTER!

THE KINGS OF MURDER AND PLUNDER HAVE COME AND GONE, AS MONSTER AFTER MONSTER, THEY FINALLY CLASHED WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA... BUT NOW COMES THE GREATEST CRIME DUEL OF ALL TIME AS CAPTAIN AMERICA... CHAMPION OF JUSTICE AND RIGHT... BATTLES CAPTAIN AMERICA... MASTER OF EVIL AND

WHAT DO YOU MEAN— "WHAT'LL WE DO ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA?"

WE'LL JUST ELIMINATE THE MUG— THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO ABOUT HIM— WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS ANYWAY?

YEAH!!!

...BUT-BUT BOSS, PLENTY OF GUYS HAVE FIGURED THEY WOULD JUST "ELIMINATE" THIS CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THEY ARE ALL DOING A STRETCH IN STIR NOW!

THEY WEREN'T SMART THAT'S WHY THEY'RE DOING A STRETCH IN STIR, SEE? THEY WEREN'T SMART, SEE?

COME ON RUNTY, WE'LL SHOW THEM WHAT I MEAN!

RIGHT BOSS!

NOW WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT?

SEARCH ME!

WHAT'S THE BOSS UP TO ANYWAY?

AND THEN SUDDENLY.....

IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA!

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!

BLAST 'IM!

HAW! HAW! HAW!

THE BULLETS ARE BOUNCING OFF HIM!

HOLY SMOKE! I NEVER HEARD OF BULLETS BOUCIN' OFF CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THAT'S BECAUSE BULLETS NEVER DO BOUNCE OFF CAPTAIN AMERICA BUT BULLETS DO BOUNCE OFF BUTCH CANTWELL! HAW! HAW!

IT'S THE BOSS!

FOOLED YOU COMPLETELY EH, FELLOWS!

REMEMBER THAT COMPLETE BULLET PROOF OUTFIT I HAD MADE A FEW YEARS BACK AND NEVER USED IT BECAUSE THE THING WAS TOO DANGED HEAVY?---WELL--- RUNTY HERE USED TO BE A TAILOR, YOU KNOW----

---AND HE MADE ME A CAPTAIN AMERICA OUTFIT TO COVER THE REAL ARMAMENT! AND SO, LIKE I TOLD YOU, WE'RE GOIN' TO ELIMINATE THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA ONCE AND FOR ALL!

AND A FEW DAYS LATER... WE FIND PRIVATES STEVE ROGERS AND BUCKY BARNES GLUEING THEIR EARS TO EVERY RADIO NEWSCAST...

AND AS THE SAVAGERY OF CAPTAIN AMERICA'S ATTACKS ON INNOCENT TOWNSFOLK GROWS, POLICE CHIEF MAGRUDER ANNOUNCES THAT HE IS CALLING IN THE F.B.I.....

HOLY SMOKE! THE F.B.I. NOW!

THIS IS BECOMING SERIOUS BUCKY AND THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA IS GOING TO TAKE ACTION, AND THAT QUICKLY!

AUTHORITIES ARE COMPLETELY AT A LOSS TO EXPLAIN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S BEHAVIOR, FOR IN THE PAST, HE HAS, OF COURSE BEEN A GREAT CHAMPION OF LAW AND JUSTICE!

SO TONIGHT, KID, WE'RE GOING ON THE TRIAL OF THIS BRUTAL IMPOSTER!

AND HOW!!!

...AND THAT NIGHT... PRIVATES STEVE ROGERS AND BUCKY BARNES QUIETLY SLIP OUT OF CAMP... AND MINUTES LATER CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY ARE RACING ACROSS THE COUNTRYSIDE.....

...BUT MEANTIME... THE "BRUTAL IMPOSTER" ALIAS BUTCH CANTWELL IS CONTINUING HIS CRIME SCOURGE UNHAMPERED.....

BUT JACK, THE POLICE HAVE WARNED PEOPLE TO KEEP OFF THE STREETS AFTER DARK!

LOOK, I'D JUST LIKE A CHANCE TO GET A CRACK AT CAPTAIN AMERICA--THE WAY HE'S BEEN BEATING UP INNOCENT PEOPLE!

IT'S FUNNY, CAPTAIN AMERICA ALWAYS USED TO BE DEFENDING INNOCENT PEOPLE INSTEAD OF BEATING THEM UP----- OH! OH!

JACK! LOOK!

AHHHA!

TAKE THIS YOU-OUCH!

AH-HA-HA-HA!

HA! HA!

HA!!

AND AT THAT SAME MOMENT...ON ANOTHER DESERTED STREET... THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA BEGINS HIS QUEST....

AND NOW THAT WE'RE HERE, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO, CAP?

ALL WE CAN DO IS KEEP PATROLLING THESE DESERTED SECTIONS OF THE CITY, WHERE THE IMPOSTER SEEMS TO STRIKE USUALLY, AND HOPE WE CAN MEET UP WITH HIM!

HOUR AFTER HOUR PASSES AND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT... AND CAP AND BUCKY SCOUT THE CITY IN VAIN....

STILL NO LUCK, CAP?

STILL NO LUCK, S'RIGHT

...AND BUTCH CANTWELL... TO HIM IT'S ALL ONE VERY BIG LAUGH.....

HA HA HA! HO HO HO!

IT'S WORKIN' FINE HUH, BUTCH?

...AND ALL THEY SEEM TO BE ABLE TO MEET UP WITH ARE VERY UNFRIENDLY COPS....

THAT'S ALL WE NEED, THE COPS AFTER US!

AND THE WORSE OF IT IS, WE CAN'T LOOK FOR THE MISPITCHER WHILE HIDING FROM THE POLICE

IT'S WORKIN' FINE ALL RIGHT! WHEN THE COPS AND THE F.B.I. ARE THROUGH WITH HIM, THERE WILL BE NO MORE CAPTAIN AMERICA AND THAT'S WHEN WE CRACK EVERY SAFE IN TOWN!

WELL, I'VE GOT TO GET BACK ON THE JOB! GOT TO KEEP THE BALL ROLLING! GOT TO KEEP THEM COPS AND O-MEN HOPPING MAD!

AND A FEW MINUTES LATER...

DON'T SHOOT UNTIL HE'S CLEAR OF THE KIDS!

IT'S CAPTAIN AMERICA BEATING UP A BUNCH OF BOY SCOUTS!

THE DIRTY FIEND!

OWW!

THE BULLETS ARE BOUNCING OFF HIM!

MUST BE WEARING A BULLET PROOF VEST OR SOMETHING!

BANG!

...AND AS CAP AND BUCKY HEAR A REPORT OF THIS LATEST OUTRAGE....

WHEW!! WELL MAYBE THOSE O'MEN WON'T FIND US HERE FOR A WHILE!

...AND THE POLICE ALSO REPORT THAT CAPTAIN AMERICA IS NOW WEARING BULLET PROOF ARMOR, FOR THEIR BULLETS BOUNCED OFF HIM WHEN THEY...

LISTEN BUCKY!!

SO THE FIEND IS WEARING BULLET PROOF ARMOR NOW!--EH?

WHICH MAKES OUR CHANCES OF STOPPING HIM SLIMMER THAN EVER!

WELL, MAYBE--BUT ON THE OTHER HAND IT GIVES US OUR ONE AND LAST CHANCE TO SMASH THE MONSTER! LET'S GO BUCKY!

BUT WHAT!!

HEY! THAT'S POLICE HEADQUARTERS RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!!

I KNOW!! NOW HERE'S WHAT YOU DO LAD...

AND MOMENTS LATER... IN THE OFFICE OF POLICE CHIEF MAGRUDER...

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT THEN! PUT MORE MEN ON AT NIGHT!! WE'VE GOT TO STOP HIM!

GULP!

I STILL DON'T LIKE THIS -- BUT THERE HE IS, CAP!

LOOK CHIEF! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME! YOU SEE, I AM THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA BUT ALL THE CRIMES YOU HAVE BEEN CHARGING TO ME HAVE BEEN COMMITTED BY A FIEND WHO HAS BEEN IMPERSONATING ME!

ALL I ASK, AND I ASK THIS ON THE STRENGTH OF MY RECORD PRIOR TO THIS CRIME SCOURGE --- ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU GIVE ME A CHANCE TO PROVE THAT WHAT I'M SAYING IS TRUE!

SO NOW CHIEF, BUCKY WILL RELEASE YOU -- AND YOU CAN EITHER YELL FOR HELP OR GIVE ME THE CHANCE I ASK! RELEASE HIM BUCKY!

ALL RIGHT CAPTAIN AMERICA, ON THE BASIS OF YOUR LONG AND FINE RECORD ON THE SIDE OF RIGHT AND JUSTICE, I GRANT YOUR REQUEST, BUT IF THIS IS A TRICK---!

THANK YOU CHIEF! NOW IF YOU WILL JUST GIVE THE RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS THIS LITTLE ANNOUNCEMENT, BUCKY AND I WILL DO THE REST!

IF CAPTAIN AMERICA WILL STOP HIS TERROR SCOURGE AT ONCE, NO CHARGES WILL BE PREFERRED AGAINST HIM FOR CRIMES ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED TO DATE!— THE POLICE HAVE NO REAL PROOF HE HAS COMMITTED! BUT IF CAPTAIN AMERICA DOES COMMIT A SINGLE CRIME WHICH CAN BE PROVED TO BE HIS WORK, THE POLICE WILL NEVER REST UNTIL HE IS PERMANENTLY BEHIND BARS!!

Signed, Police Chief Harvey Magruder

AND THE FOLLOWING NIGHT AFTER CAPS ANNOUNCEMENT HAD BEEN BROADCAST.....

BUT CAP, WHAT ARE WE WAITING HERE FOR---?

FOR THAT BUCKY!

ALRIGHT BUCKY, THERE'S OUR MAN, GRAB HIS HEADPIECE!

GOSH! IT'S THE FIEND HIMSELF!

AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF WHAT'S INSIDE THE HEADPIECE!

THAT ARMOR HE WORE! I FIGURED HE'D BE IN A BIG HURRY TO GIVE YOU THAT PROOF OF MY GUILT AND IN THAT ARMOR-OUTFIT, HE KNEW HE COULD SAFELY ATTACK YOU HERE IN YOUR OFFICE!

OF COURSE OBVIOUSLY!

BUT WHAT MADE YOU SO SURE THAT THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WOULD BRING HIM HERE IMMEDIATELY AFTER HE CAPTAIN AMERICA?

NO... A FEW MINUTES LATER...

THE END.

CAPTAIN AMERICA

THE FATAL BITE OF THE MOST POISONOUS OF ALL REPTILES, THE FEARED AND DEADLY PUFF-ADDER, IS LEGEND! THAT IS... WHEN ALIVE AND LETHAL FANGS SPEW FORTH THEIR DEADLY VENOM!

BUT HOW CAN THE DRIED, SHRIVELED SKULL OF THIS LONG DEAD CREATURE...KILL?

THIS IS THE BAFFLING QUESTION WITH WHICH **CAPTAIN AMERICA** AND **BUCKY** ARE CONFRONTED, AND WHICH THEY ANSWER WITH SWIFT DEDUCTION AND FLASHING FISTS IN.....

The MYSTERY OF THE PUFF-ADDER SKULLS!

OH STEVE! MY BANK ACCOUNT SURE IS GROWING! THE MORE BUCKS I BUY ANOTHER BOND!

SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THAT MAN OVER THERE, KID!

STEVE ROGER'S ALERT MIND SIZES UP AN UNUSUAL SITUATION....

I'LL TAKE THE MONEY! TAKE HIM INTO MY OFFICE AND I'LL GET A DOCTOR!

NO! MR. RAMSEY OFTEN GETS THESE ATTACKS! I WILL TAKE HIM HOME!

STEVE'S SUSPICIONS ARE SUPPORTED BY THE BANK MANAGERS COMMENT...

I'M WORRIED! THERE'S FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS IN THAT PACKAGE!

PHEW! I'M CHECKING ON THAT BUTLER!

THOUGHT SO! THAT BUTLER DUMPED RAMSEY IN HIS CAR AND IS OFF WITH THE MONEY!

HEY, STEVE! WAIT FOR ME! WHAT'S UP?

AS STEVE WHIRLS TO MEET THE ATTACK, THE CRAFTY BUTLER SLIPS OUT OF HIS COAT AND IS GONE WITH THE MONEY.....

IN A FEW SWIFT STRIDES, STEVE OVER-TAKES THE BUTLER.....

I-I WAS... GOING FOR... A DOCTOR!

SURE! THE DOCTOR YOU WOULDN'T LET THE BANK MANAGER CALL, EH? AND TAKING THE MONEY SO IT WOULD BE SAFE!

STEVE! LOOK OUT!

WHILE BUCKY GOES DOWN FROM A VICIOUS BLOW ON THE NOSE....

OW!

THEY GOT AWAY! SOME CAR PICKED 'EM UP! I GOT THE NUMBER, THOUGH!

NEVER MIND THEM! GET A DOCTOR, QUICK!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER...

ARE YOU SURE HE'S ALL RIGHT, DOCTOR!

CERTAINLY! THESE HEALTHY YOUNGSTERS CAN'T BE STOPPED BY A BLOODY NOSE! I PACKED IT WITH COTTON!

RAMSEY'S DEAD FROM HEART TROUBLE! I FOUND THIS SKULL ON THE FLOOR! PROBABLY FELL FROM HIS POCKET!

TALKING ABOUT POCKETS! LOOK AT THIS LITTLE BOOK FROM THE BUTLER'S POCKET, STEVE!

HMM? LINES THRU THE FIRST **THREE** NAMES! AND RAMSEY'S NAME **LAST**! WAIT! SOMETHING FAMILIAR ABOUT THE FIRST TWO NAMES!

SOME VARIETY OF POISONOUS SNAKE! I CAN TELL FROM THIS CAVITY FOR THE POISON SAC!

HEY, STEVE! LOOK WHAT'S ON THIS PAGE!

A SHORT POW-WOW WITH BUCKY AND STEVE HAS PART OF THE ANSWER...

BURTON AND SMATHERS! REMEMBER, STEVE? PAPERS WERE FULL OF THE MYSTERIOUS DEATHS OF WALL STREET BIG SHOTS!

OF COURSE! AND RAMSEY ALSO WAS ONE! **LET'S GO, BUCKY!**

SWIFT CHANGE OF COSTUME, AND CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY STREAK ACROSS THE CITY...

OKAY, GIVE OUT! WHY IN SUCH A HURRY?

TO SAVE LITTLE'S LIFE! HE'S NEXT ON THE DEATH LIST!

I AM MR LITTLE'S SECRETARY! HE IS GONE FOR THE DAY! MAY I HELP CAPTAIN AMERICA?

THAT SKULL ON THE DESK! WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

WHY... WHY... I DIDN'T SEE IT BEFORE! I DON'T KNOW!

DON'T TOUCH IT! QUICK! WHERE IS MR. LITTLE NOW?

HE'S AT THE BANK DOWNSTAIRS! WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THAT?

TURN IT OVER TO THE POLICE! COME ON, BUCKY!

BANK? NOW I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT!

HOW'LL YOU RECOGNIZE MR LITTLE? YOU DON'T KNOW HIM!

I DON'T HAVE TO, IF MY DEDUCTIONS ARE RIGHT! YOU RUN AND GET A DOCTOR, QUICK!

BANK

CAP'S EYES SWEEP THE BANK INTERIOR AND HE SUDDENLY DETECTS HIS QUARRY.....

THE BUTLER! ONLY THIS TIME HE'S PLAYING CHAUFFEUR!

AS CAP DOWNS THE FLEEING CHAUFFEUR, A GLEAMING EYED, TURBANED AND BEARDED FIGURE ROARS OFF IN A CAR PARKED IN FRONT OF THE BANK.....

AH-H-H!

YOU'RE STAYING THIS TIME, KILLER! NO MORE COAT SLIPPING FOR YOU! OH-OH! HERE COMES THE REST OF THAT UNHOLY QUARTETTE!

THAT'S CRACKING TWO SKULLS WITH ONE BIRD!

CRASH!

TWO DOWN AND TWO RATS TO GO! THAT DOES IT!

ALL FOUR OF EM! I KNEW I'D MISS ALL THE FUN!

HELLO, BUCKY!

AFTER ASCERTAINING THAT MR. LITTLE IS IN THE HANDS OF THE DOCTOR BUCKY SUMMONED, OUR DUO OF CRIME FIGHTERS RACE OUT OF THE CITY AND APPROACHE A LONELY OLD HOUSE.....

THE DOCTOR SAID A FEW SECONDS MORE AND MR. LITTLE WOULD OF BEEN A DEAD PIGEON FROM HEART TROUBLE! QUEER, ISN'T IT? THAT'S WHAT THE OTHER DIED FROM!

RIGHT! AND I THINK WE'LL FIND THE ANSWER IN THIS PLACE! I GOT THAT MUCH OUT OF THE CHAUFFEUR!

JUST AS CAP IS FIGURING SOME WAY OF SCALING THE HIGH WALLS THE GATES ARE OPENED!

WHAT THE ?

?

ENTER SAHIBS! THE MASTER BIDS YOU WELCOME!

ENTER HERE, SAHIBS!

PST... CAP, IT'S A TRAP!

COMMANDING VOICE SPEAKS OUT BEYOND THE ARCHED DOORWAY.

IN YOU GO!

WE CANNOT! IT IS FORBIDDEN!

AFTER YOU TWO GENTLEMEN! I DON'T FANCY HAVING YOU AT MY BACK!

THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH, CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THEY DARE NOT DEFILE MY CHAMBER, BEING OF A LOWER CASTE... BUT THIS DOES NOT APPLY TO THE AUGUST PRESENCE OF CAPTAIN AMERICA!

THE CHAMBER OF THE SNAKE SKULLS...

GULP!

(HMM... SOMETHING QUEER ABOUT THAT MASK...) SO YOU WERE EXPECTING US, MR.... MR...?

WITH YOUR INDULGENCE I SHALL REMAIN NAMELESS! YES! I WAS IN THAT CAR AT THE BANK WHEN YOU ATTACKED MY SERVANTS!

I SEE YOU STARING AT MY GAUZE MASK! FORGIVE ME! I WAS AT WORK... WHAT TH...?

I'LL HELP YOU OFF WITH IT! I PREFER SEEING WHO MY OPPONENTS ARE!

SOME KIND OF SPECIALLY CONSTRUCTED MASK UNDER THE GAUZE... BUT WHY?

FOOLS! YOU SHALL LEARN AT ONCE!

BUCKY WARCRES IN ANGUISH-MENT, AS CAP STAGGERS MID-WAY IN A LEAP FOR HIS MAN...

LET'S GO, BUCKY! I'M RIGHT IN TH...

BUCKY TRAINED FOR EVERY EMERGENCY MAKES A STARTLING DISCOVERY...

HA! THE VAPOR FROM THE SKULLS OF MY PUFF-ADDERS MAKES YOU WEAK! YOU ARE BOTH IN MY POWER!

YOU TWO HAVE BEEN INHALING IT ALL THE TIME! IT ROBS THE VICTIMS OF THEIR WILLS! I MAKE THEM MY SLAVES!

HE'S GOT CAP ALL RIGHT, BUT NOT ME! MY MIND IS PERFECTLY CLEAR!

YOU ARE POWERLESS! AND NOW I WILL SUMMON MY TWO SLAVES TO RID ME OF YOU AND YOUR MEDDLING FOREVER!

HE MAY BE RAT, BUT I'M NOT!

AIR! CAP MUST HAVE AIR... OH-OH! THE RAT'S GOING FOR REINFORCEMENTS!

GREAT GUSTS OF AIR ARE DRAWN INTO THE ROOM AND TOWARDS CAP STANDING TRANSFIXED AS BUCKY COURAGEOUSLY AWAITS BATTLE.....

UH-WH-AT! WHERE AM I?

YO-WHH! YIPEEE! THE AIR IS REVIVING CAP! HE'S STIRRING OUT OF THE DAZE!

NEVER BETTER! AS YOU CAN JUDGE FOR YOURSELF! QUICK, BUCKY!

CAP! YOU'RE OKAY AGAIN?

THAT'S RIGHT, BUCKY! HOW COME YOU WEREN'T AFFECTED?

TOO BUSY TO ANSWER NOW, CAP!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! NO ONE IS IMMUNE TO THE PUFF ADDER VAPOR!

SOMETIME LATER....

PRETTY SLICK SET-UP! USED HIS SECRET DRUG TO DRAIN A LARGE SUM FROM THE BANK! BUT I STILL DON'T SAVVY WHY THEY DIED!

HE WAS CLEVER ENOUGH TO PICK VICTIMS WITH BAD HEARTS! THAT PUFF-ADDER VAPOR COL-LAPSED HEARTS AFTER A WHILE! AND NOW... ABOUT YOUR IMMUNITY!

IT MUST'VE BEEN THE COTTON THE DOC STUFFED INTO MY NOSE TO STOP THE BLEEDING! PRE-VENTED MY INHALING TOO MUCH OF THE VAPOR, I GUESS!

IMAGINE CAPTAIN AMERICA SAVED BY, AND BUCKY GRATEFUL FOR... A BLOODY NOSE!

THE END

DETECTIVE

THE CASE OF THE FORGED CHECK!

AT A LARGE BUSINESS FIRM, MICHAEL TRAPP IS CALLED IN TO INVESTIGATE A FORGERY.

TELL ME MR. GOULD, WHO DO SUSPECT FORGED YOUR NAME ON THAT CHECK AND CASHED IT?

IT'S EITHER ONE OF THOSE THREE CLERKS. THEY ALONE HAVE ACCESS TO MY CHECK BOOK!

I WANT YOU TO INTRODUCE ME TO THOSE THREE AS ELMER THOMAS, YOUR NEW EMPLOYEE. I MAY HAVE THE GUILTY PERSON BY THE END OF THIS DAY!

VERY WELL, MR. TRAPP (AHEM) I MEAN MR. THOMAS!

LATER.

HOW DO YOU LIKE IT HERE MR. THOMAS?

SWELL.... WOULD YOU MIND IF I BORROW YOUR BLOTTER!

HMM THAT NEW FELLER HAS A HABIT OF BORROWIN' THINGS!

HE'S CUTE!

AND STILL LATER--

JUST AS I THOUGHT I THINK I HAVE MY FORGER!

LOOK POP, I'M NOT ELMER THOMAS BUT MIKE TRAPP, POLICE HEADQUARTERS, I'M ARRESTING YOU FOR FORGERY... SO GET YOUR COAT AND COME ALONG WITH ME!

LATER AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS ---

GEE WHIZ MIKE IT DIDN'T TAKE YOU LONG TO SOLVE THAT CASE, BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW IT WAS THAT OLD GUY?

I RAMBLED ON ONE THING, POPPER, AND THAT WAS THE BLOTTER. THE GUILTY PERSON USED "POPS" BLOTTER SHOWED THE REVERSE SIGNATURE OF MR. GOULD. THE BLOTTER HE USED TO BLOT THE SIGN- ATURE HE FORGED- GAVE HIM AWAY!

TURN PAGE UPSIDE DOWN FOR SOLUTION

FREE

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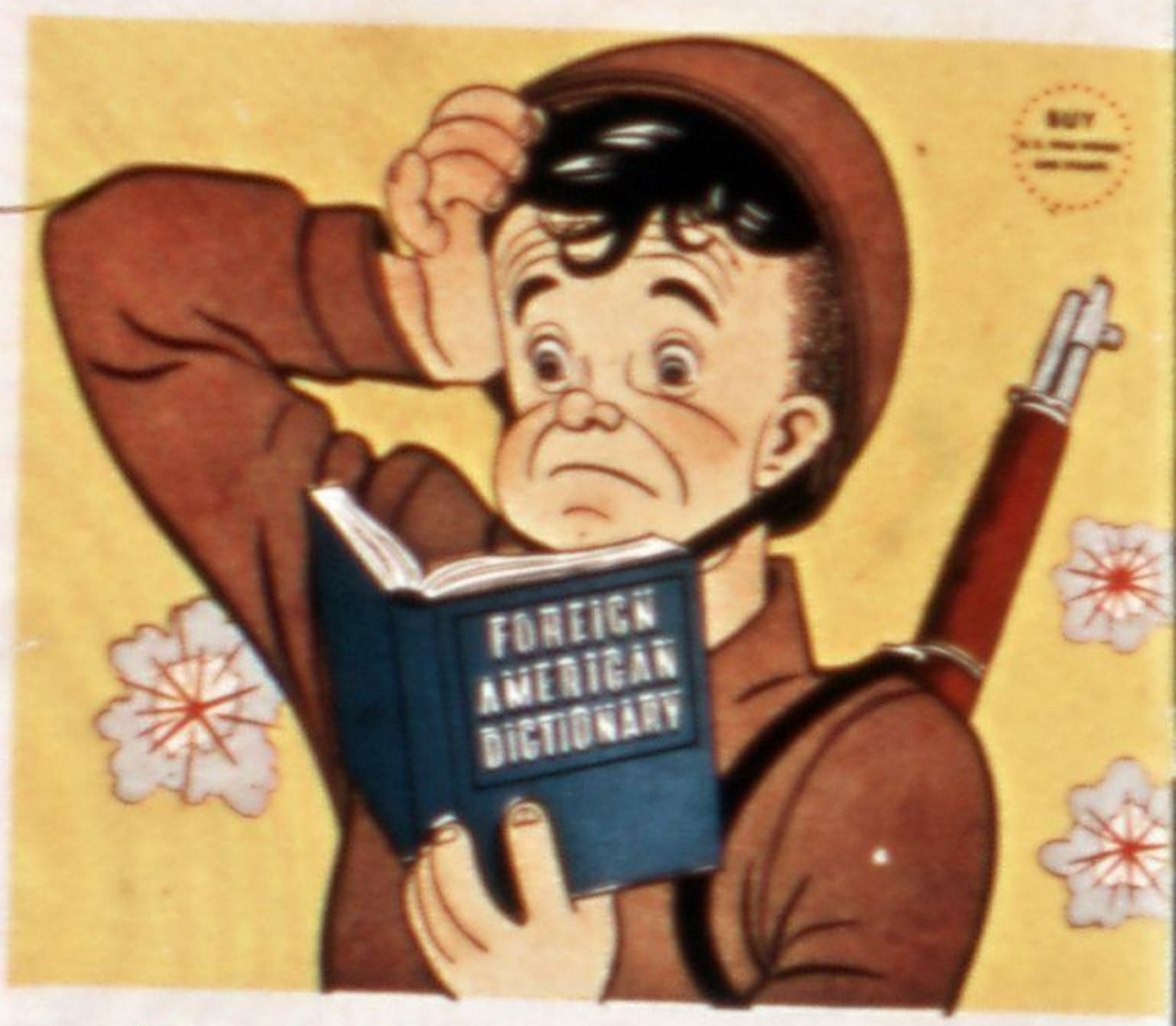

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